

**“Only” Meetings Town Hall**  
*Creating safe and inclusive spaces for all groups*

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## **What is it?**

An initial town hall to begin an ACA Fellowship-wide discussion to provide the World Service Organization Board of Trustees guidance for developing a Traditions-based policy that will:

- Define qualifications and language that qualifies a meeting to be registered with WSO and listed on the AdultChildren.org meeting list directory
- Define criteria for which meetings are removed (delisted) by WSO on behalf of the Fellowship

This town hall is not to debate the law. Compliance and clarity with respect to laws of the United States and the State of California are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. We will address this separately at a subsequent town hall.

## **When is it?**

Sunday, May 23, 2021 at 12pm (Noon) to 1:30pm Eastern (US and Canada)

## **Where is it?**

Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86218999305>

Meeting ID: 862 1899 9305

Passcode: 13579

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## **Why is the Board of Trustees doing this?**

How do we create safe and inclusive spaces for all groups, including:

- Those groups traumatized and/or marginalized based on gender, race, sexual orientation, community (indigenous, etc.), country, etc.
- Mixed meeting groups and different types of meeting groups
- Space where people can have conversations within their community because it feels safe to talk about those topics there, as compared to conversations that don't feel safe to have outside their community.

In the past, and currently, the language available for meeting descriptions included “only” (i.e., “Men Only”, “Women Only”).

Traditionally, it meant same gender groups. Today, people are looking at creating meetings from sexual orientation, race, culture and many other perspectives.

This conversation came up because the Board of Trustees had received many complaints about an “only” meeting and voted to de-list the associated meetings based on our understanding of the law as it relates to discrimination on protected grounds. At the same time, we understood that there is a lack of clear policy about criteria for WSO listing and delisting meeting groups and in order to address that, we planned this townhall to engage our fellowship in developing healthy solutions.

We acknowledge there is value in and a need for specialty/similar community meetings.

Everyone is coming to ACA for the same purpose: to heal from the effects of childhood trauma. They're trying to have a safe conversation within their own communities, with people who are like them. We're challenged by the law, which is our responsibility. We're also challenged by the fact that we don't have a roadmap to accomplish this task.

ACA requires us to do this for ourselves, and with ourselves, together as a fellowship. This is where we put our recovery into practice. If any 12-step group could do this, it's us.

These are courageous conversations to have as a fellowship, within our own ACA community. We're grateful to the BI-POC, LGBTQ, hetero, and indigenous communities for raising the topic and bringing us to this starting point in this conversation. We recognize that sometimes people feel uncomfortable and unsafe when having these conversations.

The board has developed the format of this town hall with the intention of ensuring that all members and communities are feeling safe to express their voices and to be heard. We are confident that together we will develop that roadmap and find healthy solutions.

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## How is this going to work?

### May 23<sup>rd</sup> Town Hall Agenda:

- Serenity Prayer
- Introductions
- Boundaries and Safety Statement
- Readings from Traditions 3, 4 and 5
- Loving Parent Meditation (from Loving Parent Guidebook)
- Statement of Purpose - Concerns about “only” meetings and their implications, how “only” meetings relate to safety, versus issues of exclusion. Should these meetings be listed in the WSO directory?
- Shares from Attendees that address the following questions. (There will be multiple question sessions, as time allows, with a Gentleness/Meditation break in between.)
  1. What do we know about our members’ (and newcomers’) needs, wants and preferences that relate to “only” meetings being listed on the WSO registered meeting list?
    - How important is it?
    - Is it what our current members want?
    - How will it affect newcomers?
    - What purpose would this serve? Is it necessary?
    - Is it helpful?
  2. What in Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families “culture” and “environment” that is relevant to this discussion? In other words— Will our decision be consistent with:
    - the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts?
    - our principles, policies, the Solution,
    - Does our literature provide any guidance about this issue?
  3. What are the ethical implications of our choices? Would we be practicing our “principles in all our affairs”?
    - Will our decision help us fulfill our primary purpose?
    - What are the implications of our choices?
    - What are the pros and cons?
    - How would this affect our fellowship? ACA as a whole?
    - If we decide to take an action, will it be the “right” thing to do?
  4. What do we wish we knew, but don’t? Might our decision have unintended consequences?

### After the town hall:

- A summary of the information gathered and a “questions worksheet” will be sent to all groups/attendees
  - Each group/attendee can report back to their group

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- o Groups/individuals can discuss the questions/summary, gathering more information
- o Include a worksheet that groups can use to add to the information for the next town hall
- Town Hall #2 to be held in 2 months
  - o Information (including answers to questions) will not be duplicated/repeated

## **Is there any other background information that may be helpful?**

- Current policy statement on the [New Meeting Registration](#) page on AdultChildren.org

*In submitting this form, I certify the following to be true:*

- *our ACA meeting agrees to follow the ACA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions to the best of our ability,*
  - *our ACA meeting is not affiliated with another 12 Step organization, with any other outside organization or with an established religion.*
- Meeting Type and Format Definitions from the [Information for Meetings and Groups](#) page on AdultChildren.org